

The Ball of Fire

By GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER
and LILLIAN CHESTER
ILLUSTRATED BY C.D. RHODES

SYNOPSIS.

At a vestry meeting of the Market Square church Gail Sargent listens to a discussion about the sale of the church to the city. He is asked to give his opinion of the church by Rev. Smith Boyd, who is apparently a business enterprise. Allison takes Gail riding in his motor car. When he suggests he is entitled to ride on the laurels of his achievements, she asks the disturbing question: "Why?" Gail, returning to her Uncle Jim's home from her drive with Allison, finds cold disapproval in the eyes of Rev. Smith Boyd, who is calling there. At a belated party Gail finds the world uncomfortably full of men, and Allison tells Jim Sargent that his new ambition is to conquer the world. Allison starts a campaign for consolidation and control of the entire transportation system of the world.

CHAPTER V—Continued.

He allowed himself four hours for sleep that night, and the next afternoon headed for Denver. On the way he studied maps again, but the one which he paid most attention was a new one drawn by himself, on which the various ranges of the Rocky Mountains were represented by scrawled, lead-penciled spirals. Right where his thin line crossed these spirals at a converging point, was Yando chasm, a pass created by nature, which was the proud possession of the Inland Pacific, now the most prosperous and direct of all the Pacific systems; and the Inland, with an insolent pride in the natural fortune which had been found for it by the cleverest of all engineers, guarded its precious right of way as no jewel was ever protected. Just east of Yando chasm there crossed a little "one-horse" railroad, which, starting at the important city of Silverknob, served some good mining towns below the Inland's line, and on the north side curved up and around through the mountains, rambling wherever there was freight or passengers to be carried, and ending on the other side of the range at Nugget City, only twenty miles north of the Inland's main line, and a hundred miles west, into the fair country which sloped down to the Pacific. This road, which had its headquarters in Denver, was called the Silverknob and Nugget City, and into its meeting walked Allison, with control.

His course here was different from that in Jersey City. He ousted every director on the board, and elected men



"Couldn't think of it," declared Wilcox, looking at the map.

of his own. Immediately after, in the director's meeting, he elected himself president, and, kindly consenting to talk with the reporters of the Denver newspapers, hurried back to Chicago, where he drove directly to the head offices of the Inland Pacific.

"I've just secured control of the Silverknob and Nugget City," he informed the general manager of the Inland.

"So I noticed," returned Wilcox, who was a young man of fifty and wore picturesque velvet hats. "The papers here made quite a sensation of your going into railroading."

"They're welcome," grinned Allison. "Say Wilcox, if you'll build a branch from Pines to Nugget City, we'll give you our Nugget City freight where we cross, at Copperville, east of the range."

Wilcox headed for the map.

"What's the distance?" he inquired.

OLD AS THE ETERNAL HILLS

R. E. Morse, the Outlaw, Lurked in Shadows in Garden of Eden, and Is Still With Us.

If Adam were still alive he would be about the same age as R. E. Morse. Adam met him after he was banished from the garden of Eden. Eve also knew him after she ate the forbidden fruit. Pharaoh must have been well acquainted with him, as he met him repeatedly. He was with Joseph's brethren a long time after they sold Joseph into Egypt. Saul, David, Solomon and all the kings of old knew him well. And in the New Testament we find men who also knew him. Judas, who betrayed the Lord and afterward killed himself; Peter, who denied his Master, and so on all the way through the Bible and up to the present time. We all know him or have met him. Could we by any power annihilate R. E. Morse, how happy we should make the world! But no one cares to profit by the experience of others, and therefore all must learn by the one

"Twenty-two miles; fairly level grade, and one bridge."

"Couldn't think of it," declared Wilcox, looking at the map. "We'd like to have your freight, for there's a lot of traffic between Silverknob and Nugget City, but it's not our territory. The smelters are at Silverknob, and they ship east over the White Range line. Anyway, why do you want to take away the haulage from your northern branch?"

"Figure on discontinuing it. The grades are steep, the local traffic is light, and the roadbed is in a rotten condition. It needs rebuilding throughout. I'll make you another proposition. I'll build the line from Pines to Nugget City myself. If you'll give us track connection at Copperville and at Pines, and will give us a traffic contract for our rolling stock on a reasonable basis."

Again Wilcox looked at the map. The Silverknob and Nugget City road began nowhere and ran nowhere, so far as the larger transportation world was concerned, and it could never figure as a competitor. The hundred miles through the precious natural pass known as the Yando chasm was not so busy a stretch of road as it was important, and the revenue from the passage of the Silverknob and Nugget City's trains would deduct considerably from the expense of maintaining that much-prized key to the golden West.

"I'll take it up with Priestly and Gorman," promised Wilcox.

"How soon can you let me know?"

"Monday."

That afternoon saw Allison headed back for New York, and the next morning he popped into the offices of the Pacific Slope and Puget Sound, where he secured a rental privilege to run the trains of the Orange Valley road into San Francisco, and down to Los Angeles, over the tracks of the P. S. and P. S. The Orange Valley was a little, blind pocket of a road, which made a juncture with the P. S. and P. S. just a short haul above San Francisco, and it ran up into a rich fruit country, but its terminus was far, far away from any possible connection with a northwestern competitor, and that bargain was easy.

That night Allison, glowing with an exultation which erased his fatigue, dressed to call on Gail Sargent.

CHAPTER VI.

Had They Spoiled Her?

Music resounded in the parlors of Jim Sargent's house; music so sweet and compelling in its harmony that Aunt Grace slipped to the head of the stairs to listen in mingled ecstasy and pride. Up through the hallway floated a clear, mellow soprano and a rich, deep baritone, blended so perfectly that they seemed twin tones. Aunt Grace, drawn by a fascination she could not resist, crept down to where she could see the source of the melody. Gail, exceptionally pretty to-night in his simple dove-colored gown with its one pink rose, sat at the piano, while towering above her, with his chest expanded and a look of perfect peace on his face, stood Rev. Smith Boyd.

Enraptured, Aunt Grace stood and listened until the close of the ballad. Leaping through her music for the next treat, Gail looked up at the young doctor, and made some smiling remark. Her shining brown hair, waving about her forehead, was caught up in a simple knot at the back, and the delicate color of her cheeks was like the fresh glow of dawn. Rev. Smith Boyd bent slightly to answer, and he, too, smiled as he spoke; but as he happened to find himself gazing deep into the brown eyes of Gail, the smile began to fade, and Aunt Grace Sargent, scared, ran back up the stairs and into her own room, where she took a book, and held it in her lap, upside down. The remark which Gail had made was this:

"You should have used your voice professionally."

The reply of the rector was:

"I do."

"I didn't mean oratorically," she laughed, then returned nervously to her search for the next selection. She had seen that change in the smile. It is so rare to find a perfect speaking voice coupled with a perfect singing voice," she rattled on. "Here's that simple little 'May Song.' Just harmony, that's all."

Once more their voices rose in that

perfect blending which is the most delicate of all exhilarations. In the melody itself there was an appealing sympathy, and, in that moment, these two were in as perfect accord as their voices. There is something in the music of the human tone which exerts a magnetic attraction like no other in the world; which breaks down the barriers of antagonism, which sweeps away the walls of self-entrenchment, which attracts and draws, which explains and does away with explanation. This was the first hour they had spent without a clash, and Rev. Smith Boyd, his eyes quite blue, tonight, brought another stack of music from the rack.

The butler, an aggravating image with only one joint in his body, paraded solemnly through the hall, and back again with the card tray, while Gail and the rector sang "Junonia" from an old college songbook, which the Reverend Boyd had discovered in high place. Aunt Grace came down the stairs and out past the doors of the music salon. There were voices of animated greeting in the hall, and Allison returned to the door just as the rector was spreading open the book at "Sweet and Low."

"Pardon me," beamed aunty. "There's a little surprise out here for you."

A rush of noise filled the hall. Lucille and Ted Teasdale, handsome Dick Rodley and Arly Fosland and Houston Van Ploom, had come clattering in as an escort for Mrs. Davies, whose pet fad was to have as many young people as possible bring her home from any place.

"Where's the baby?" demanded handsome Dick Rodley, heading for the stairs.

"Silly, you mustn't!" cried Lucille, and started after him. "Flakes should be asleep at this hour."

"I came in for the sole purpose of teaching Flakes the turkey trot," declared handsome Dick, and ran away, followed by Lucille.

"Lucille's becoming passe," criticized Ted. "She's flirting with Rodney for the second time."

"Can you blame her?" defended Arly Fosland. She was sitting in the deep corner of her favorite couch, nursing a slender ankle, and even her shining black hair, to say nothing of her shining black eyes, seemed to be snapping with wicked delight.

Lucille and handsome Dick came struggling down the stairway with Flakes between them, and Gail sprang instantly to take the bewildered puppy from them both. Little blonde Lucille gave up her interest to the prior right, but Rodley pretended to be obstinate about it. His deep eyes burned down into Gail's, as he stood bending above her, and his smile, to Howard's concentrated gaze, had in it that dangerous fascination which few women could resist! Gail was positively smiling up into his eyes!

"Tableau!" called Ted. "All ready for the next reel."

"Hold it a while," begged Arly, and even Rev. Smith Boyd was forced to admit that the picture was handsome enough to be retained. The Adonis-like Dick, with his black hair and black eyes, his curly black mustache and his black goatee, his pink cheeks and his white teeth; Gail, gracefully erect, her head thrown back, her brown hair waving and her fluffy white Flakes between them; it was painfully beautiful.

"Children, go home," suddenly commanded Mrs. Davies. "Dick, put the dog back where you found it."

"I suppose we'll have to go home," drawled Ted. "Dick, put back that dog."

"Put away the dog, Dick," ordered the heavier voice of young Van Ploom. "Come along, Gail, I'll put him away." At his approach, Dick placed the puppy, with great care, in Gail's charge, and took her arm. Van Ploom took her other arm, and together the trio, laughing, went away to return Flakes to his bed. They clung to her most affectionately, bending over her on either side; and they called her Gail!

The others were ready to go when they returned from the collie nursery, and the three young men stood for a moment in a row near the door. Gail looked them over with a puzzled expression. What was there about them which was so attractive? Was it poise, suaveness, polish, breeding, experience, insolence, grooming—what? Even the stiff Van Ploom seemed smooth of bearing tonight!

They still were standing in the hall, and the front door opened.

"Brought you a prodigal," hailed Uncle Jim, slipping his latchkey in his pocket as he held the door open for the prodigal in question.

Gail was watching the doorway. Someone outside was vigorously stamping his feet. The prodigal came in, and proved to be Allison, buoyant and spry, sparkling of eye, firm of jaw, and ruddy from the night wind. Smiling with the suaveness of welcome, he came eagerly up to Gail, and took her hand, retaining it until she felt compelled to withdraw it, recognizing again that thrill. The barest trace of

a flush came into her cheeks, and paled again.

Gail changed her garments and let down her waving hair and, disdaining the help of her maid, performed all the little nightly duties, to the putting away of her clothing. Then, in a perfectly neat and orderly boudoir, she sat down to take herself seriously in hand.

There was a knock at the door and, on invitation, the tall and stately Mrs. Helen Davies came in, frilled and ruffled for the night. She found the dainty, little guest boudoir in green tinted dimness. Gail had turned down all the lights in the room except the green lamps under the canopy, and she sat on the divan, with her brown hair rippling about her shoulders, her knees clasped in her arms, and her dainty little boudoir slippers peeping from her flowing pink negligee, while the dim green light, suited to her present reflections, only enhanced the clear pink of her complexion. Mrs. Davies moved over to the other side of Gail, where she could surround her, and laid the brown head on her shoulder.

Gail, whose quick intelligence no movement escaped, lay comfortably on Aunt Helen's shoulder, and a clear laugh rippled out. She could not see the smile of satisfaction and relief with which Aunt Helen Davies received that laugh.

"My dear," I am quite well pleased with you," she said. "You have a brilliant future before you."

Gail's eyelids closed; the long, brown lashes curved down on her cheeks, revealing just a sparkle of brightness, while the mischievous little smile twitched at the corners of her lips.

"If you were an ordinary girl, I would urge you, tonight, to make a selection among the exceptionally ex-



She Sat With Her Brown Hair Rippling Around Her Shoulders.

cellent matrimonial material of which you have a choice, but, with your extraordinary talents and beauty, my advice is just to the contrary. You should delay until you have had a wider opportunity for judgment. You have not as yet shown any marked preference, I hope."

Gail's quite unreasoning impulse was to giggle, but she clothed her voice demurely.

"No, Aunt Helen."

"You are remarkably wise," complimented Aunt Helen, a bit of appreciation which quite checked Gail's impulse to giggle. "In the meantime, it is just as well to study your opportunities. Of course there's Dick Rodley, whom no one considers seriously, and Willis Cunningham, whose one and only drawback is such questionable health that he might persistently interfere with your social activities. Houston Van Ploom, I am frank to say, is the most eligible of all, and to have attracted his attention is a distinct triumph. Mr. Allison, while rather advanced in years—"

"Please!" cried Gail. "You'd think I was a horse."

"I know just how you feel," stated Aunt Helen, entirely unflinched; "but you have your future to consider, and I wish to invite your confidence," and in her voice there was the quaver of being concerned.

"Thank you, Aunt Helen," said Gail, realizing the sincerity of the older woman's intentions, and, putting her arms around Mrs. Davies' neck, she kissed her. "It is dear of you to take so much interest."

"I think it's pride," confessed Mrs. Davies, naively. "I won't keep you up a minute longer, Gail. Go to bed, and get all the sleep you can. Only sleep will keep those roses in your cheeks. Good-night," and with a parting caress she went to her own room, with a sense of a duty well performed.

Gail smiled retrospectively, and tried the blue light under the canopy lamp, but turned it out immediately

The green gave a much better effect of moonlight on the floor.

She called herself back out of the mists of her previous thought. What was this Gail, and what was she? There had come a new need in her, a new awakening. Something seemed to have changed in her, to have crystallized. Whatever this crystallization was, it had made her know that marriage was not to be looked upon as a mere inevitable social episode. Her thoughts flew back to Aunt Helen. Her eyelashes brushed her cheeks, and the little smile of sarcasm twitched the corners of her lips.

Aunt Helen's list of eligibles. Gail reviewed them now deliberately; not with the thought of the social advantages they might offer her, but as men. She reviewed others whom she had met. For the first time in her life, she was frankly and self-consciously interested in men; curious about them. She had reached her third stage of development; the fair prince age, the "I suppose I shall have to be married one day" age, and now the age of conscious awakening. She wondered, in some perplexity, as to what had brought about her nascent; rather, and she knitted her pretty brows, who had brought it about?

The library clock chimed the hour, and startled her out of her reverie. She turned on the lights, and sat in front of her mirror to give her hair one of those extra brushings for which it was so grateful, and which it repaid with so much beauty. She paused deliberately to study herself in the glass. Why, this was a new Gail, a more potent Gail. What was it Allison had said about her potentialities? Allison. Strong, forceful, aggressive Allison. He was potent himself. A thrill of his handclasp clung with her yet, and a slight flush crept into her cheeks.

Aunt Grace had worried about Jim's little cold, and the distant mouse she thought she heard, and the silver chest, and Lucille's dangerous-looking new horse, until all these topics had faded, when she detected the unmistakable click of a switch button near by. It must be in Gail's suite. Hadn't the child retired yet? She lay quite still pondering that mighty question for ten minutes, and then, unable to rest any longer, she slipped out of bed and across the hall. There was no light coming from under the doors of either the boudoir or the bedroom, so Aunt Grace peeped into the latter apartment, then she tiptoed softly away.

(—) In her cascade of pink tulle, was at the north window, kneeling, with her earnest face upturned to one bright, pale star.

CHAPTER VII.

Still Pleading Out the World.

The map of the United States in Edward E. Allison's library began, now, to develop little streaks, but they were boldly marked, and they hugged with extraordinary closeness, the pencil mark which Allison had drawn from New York to Chicago and from Chicago to San Francisco. There were long gaps between them, but these did not seem to worry him very much. It was the little stretches, sometimes scarcely over an inch, which he drew with such evident pleasure from day to day, and now, occasionally, as he passed in and out, he stopped by the far western group of little marks by bridging three small gaps, he received a caller in the person of a short, well-dressed old man, who walked with a cane and looked half asleep, by reason of the many puffs which had piled up under his eyes and nearly closed them.

"I'm ready to wind up, Tim," remarked Allison, offering his caller a cigar, and lighting one himself. "When can we have that Vedder Court property condemned?"

"Whenever you give the word," reported Tim Cormann, who spoke with an asthmatic voice, and with the quiet dignity of a man who had borne grave business responsibilities, and had borne them well.

Allison nodded his head in satisfaction.

"You're sure there can't be any hitch in it?"

"Not if I say it's all right," and the words were Tim's only reproach. His tone was perfectly level, and there was no glint in his eyes. Offended dignity had nothing to do with business. "Give me one week's notice, and the Vedder Court property will be condemned for the city terminal of the Municipal Transportation company. Appraisal, thirty-one million."

"I only wanted to be reassured," apologized Allison. "I took your word that you could swing it when I made my own gamble, but now I have to drag other people into it."

"That's right," agreed Tim. "I never get offended over straight business." In other times Tim Cormann would have said "get sore," but, as he neared the end of his years of useful activity, he was making quite a spectacle of refinement, and stocking a picture gallery, and becoming a connoisseur collector of rare old jewels. He dressed three times a day.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE EUROPEAN WAR A YEAR AGO THIS WEEK

Oct. 28, 1914.

Germans crossed Yser canal near Dixmude.
Battle at Neuport.
Russians drove Germans from Vistula river and retook Lodz and Radom.
Austro-Germans defeated near Przemyel.
Heavy fighting in Bosnia.
Japanese sank German cruiser Acolius off Honolulu.
Rebellion by De Wet and Beyers in South Africa.

Oct. 28, 1914.

German advance checked on the Yser.
Battle between Rawa and the Ijanka river.
French steamer Amiral Gantheaume, loaded with refugees, sunk by torpedo or mine off Boulogne.
Slayers of Archduke Ferdinand found guilty of treason.
German property in France taken into trusteeship.

Oct. 27, 1914.

Allies captured Thourout and claimed Germans were driven across border near Nancy.
Fierce battles between La Bassee and the Somme.
New Russian army crossed the Vistula north of Ivangorod.
Russians drove Germans from Rawa.
British dreadnaught Audacious sunk off Ireland by mine or torpedo.
Germans laid mines off Irish coast.

Oct. 28, 1914.

Allies repulsed night attack near Dixmude and made gains in Ypres region and between La Bassee and Lens.
Germans retreated before Russians advancing from Warsaw and Ivangorod.
Battle along River San.
Hungarian cavalry division almost annihilated in Galicia.
Belgians defeated Germans on Lake Tanganyika, Africa.
Emden sank a Japanese steamer Japanese cruiser Chitose repelled attack of two German warships.
Holland army massed on border to prevent invasion.

Oct. 29, 1914.

Allies gained near Ostend.
Germans made gains west of Lille and southwest of Verdun.
Germans entrenched themselves near Thiel.
Russians split opposing armies north and south of Piliza river.
Northern German army in retreat.
Allies took Edo, Africa.
Turkey began war on Russia by bombarding Odessa and Theodosia from sea.
Emden sank Russian cruiser and French destroyer in Penang harbor.
German airmen dropped bombs on Bethune, killing 19 women.
Prince Louis of Battenberg resigned as first sea lord of British admiralty, being succeeded by Sir John Fisher.

Oct. 30, 1914.

Belgians flooded lower Yser valley, compelling Germans to withdraw.
Germans made gains in the Argonne.
Russians, pursuing retreating Germans, captured guns and aeroplanes and retook Czernowitz.
Austrians defeated near Tarnow.
Japanese, aided by Indian troops, attacked Germans at Tsingtau.
German cruiser Koenigsberg bottled up in Rufiji river on African coast.
Turkish torpedo boats bombarded Odessa, sinking one Russian gunboat, three liners and French steamer.
Russian and Turkish fleets fought in Black sea.
German reserves of 1914 called out.
American commission sent food-stuffs to Belgium.

Hope of Improvement.

"Do you think the world is getting better?"

"It ought to be," replied the man who worries about his health. "There are more new medicines being invented every year."

Heavier Crop.

"Now scientists say that vegetables are susceptible to praise."

"I think I'll try that on my cabbage. It would help a heap if they all got swelled heads."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Truly Accomplished.

"Is your daughter a musician?"
"Yes," replied Mr. Cumrox; "she has studied music thoroughly."
"But she never sings or plays the current melodies."
"No. She has studied music enough to have some respect for it."

To Be Expected.

"Just as we got to the mouth of the river—"
"What happened?"
"We found ourselves in the teeth of the wind."

MRS. THOMSON TELLS WOMEN

How She Was Helped During Change of Life by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

Philadelphia, Pa.—"I am just 52 years of age and during Change of Life I suffered for six years

terribly. I tried several doctors but none seemed to give me any relief. Every month the pains were intense in both sides, and made me so weak that I had to go to bed. At last a friend recommended Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound to me and I tried it at once and found much relief. After that I had no pains at all and could do my housework and shopping the same as always. For years I have praised Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for what it has done for me, and shall always recommend it as a woman's friend. You are at liberty to use my letter in any way."—Mrs. Thomson, 649 W. Russell St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Change of Life is one of the most critical periods of a woman's existence. Women everywhere should remember that there is no other remedy known to carry women so successfully through this trying period as Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

If you want special advice write to Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co. (confidential), Lynn, Mass. Your letter will be opened, read and answered by a woman and held in strict confidence.

Warner's Safe Pills

are purely vegetable, sugar-coated and absolutely free from injurious substances. A Perfect Laxative. For indigestion, biliousness, torpid liver and constipation, they do not gripe or leave any bad after effects, 25c a box. If your druggist cannot supply you, we will.

Write for Booklet. Warner's Safe Remedies Co., Rochester, N. Y.

ABSORBINE STOPS LAMENESS

from a Bone Spavin, Ring Bone, Splint, Curb, Side Bone, or similar trouble and gets horse going sound. It acts mildly but quickly and good results are lasting. Does not blister or remove the hair and horse can be worked. Page 17 in pamphlet with each bottle tells how. \$2.00 a bottle delivered. Horse Book 9 A Free. ABSORBINE, JR., the antiseptic liniment for man and horse, reduces Painful Swellings, Enlarged Glands, Wens, Bruises, Varicose Veins, heals Sores. Always Pain. Will tell you more if you write. \$1 and \$2 a bottle at druggists or dealers. Liberal trial bottle for the owner. W. F. YOUNG, P. O. F., 310 Temple St., Springfield, Mass.

Tutt's Pills

stimulate the torpid liver, strengthen the digestive organs, regulate the bowels. A remedy for sick headache. Unquestioned as an ANTI-BILIOUS MEDICINE. Elegantly sugar coated. Small dose. Price, 25c.

Nature Falls into Line.

"Even the elements appear to be adapting themselves to the exigencies of war."
"How now?"
"Only yesterday I was reading of a khaki-colored cloud."

SOAP IS STRONGLY ALKALINE and constant use will burn out the scurf. Cleanse the scalp by shampooing with "La Creole" Hair Dressing, and darken, in the natural way, those ugly, grizzly hairs. Price, \$1.00.—Adv.

Easily Convinced.

Said She—A well-known physician says kissing is dangerous and must go. Said He—Well, I'm ready; let her go.

THIS IS THE AGE OF YOUTH.

You will look ten years younger if you darken your ugly, grizzly, gray hairs by using "La Creole" Hair Dressing.—Adv.

Save a little of your sympathy for the poor proofer. He has to read the war news.

It's mighty hard to keep level-headed if you're not always on the square.

If Never Came Back

Backache Sufferer! Thousands will tell you what wonderful relief they have had from Doan's Kidney Pills. Not only relief, but lasting cures. If you are lame in the morning, have backache, nervous troubles, dizzy spells and irregular kidney or bladder action, don't wait until gravel, dropsy or Bright's disease gets hold. Use Doan's Kidney Pills, the best-recommended kidney medicine.

A Missouri Case

Mrs. J. C. O'Dell, 812 W. Seventh St., Joplin, Mo., says: "Doan's Kidney Pills were a God-send to me. I had a kidney complaint in the worst form, with a dull, heavy pain in the small of my back. When these attacks came on I couldn't move and for five weeks was unable to do a word of work. Soon after I used Doan's Kidney Pills, I improved and it wasn't long before the troubles left me. The cure has been permanent."

Get Doan's at Any Store, 50c a Box. **DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS** POSTER-MILBURN CO., BUFFALO, N. Y.

LAUGHING AT SERIOUS THINGS

Attitude of the World Has Long Been a Matter of Complaint Among the Realists.

Many creative dramatists seek to draw men and women with remorseless realism. Now, it is exactly this remorselessness of the artist which gets him into trouble with a number of different sections of our world. He is unflinching in his portrayal, and men do not like unflinching portrait painters.

They want the picture touched up to some indulgent and benevolent philanthropist. The realist refuses to play with what he deems to be the truth. At the time when the younger Dumas was writing extremely interesting though not altogether persuasive prefaces to his plays and was particularly occupied with some of the destructive activities of modern woman he made some remarks about the things we ought to laugh at and the things we ought not to laugh at. "It is our common habit in France,"

he wrote, "to laugh at serious things." It is "to our habit—especially in musical comedies—to laugh at serious things."

But, according to Dumas, the only right attitude is to laugh at things which are not serious, and which make no pretension of being serious.

When we are face to face with a grave social danger it is a very curious sort of wisdom which dismisses such subjects with a laugh.

There is, of course, a touch of pedantry in an observation like this, and there was certainly a good deal of pedantry in Dumas' didactic attitude. Nevertheless, there is solid truth beneath, which is very